

House Bill 1567

By: Representative Lane of the 158th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to state symbols, so as to designate the red drum as the official state salt-water fish;
3 to provide legislative findings and declarations; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
4 purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

8 (1) The red drum, also known as redfish, spottail bass, and channel bass, is highly prized
9 by Georgia's citizens as a worthy adversary on the end of a fishing line and an epicurean
10 delight on the table;

11 (2) A visually stunning specimen of marine life, the red drum varies in color from a pale
12 pink to a deep bronze. The false-eye spot found near the tail is a unique characteristic as
13 is the powder blue markings on the fringe of the tail;

14 (3) The red drum is found from the smallest tidal creek to the crashing surf on lonely
15 barrier islands to the depths of the Atlantic Ocean and thus is symbolic of the link
16 between the diversity of habitats found along Georgia's coast;

17 (4) A long-lived species, red drum are known to reach an age in excess of 50 years. A
18 single female may produce billions of eggs over a lifetime;

19 (5) Prior to the mid-1980's, Georgia's red drum population was in jeopardy from the
20 over harvesting of immature fish and adults;

21 (6) State biologists and concerned anglers saw the need for conservation of this
22 magnificent species and advocated for the first harvest regulations implemented by the
23 General Assembly in 1986;

(7) Year in and year out, red drum rank among the top three species caught and kept by Georgia salt-water anglers. Georgia's human population continues to increase and the number of salt-water anglers seeking red drum increase along with it;

(8) Because of the red drum's importance to Georgia anglers, the landmark Peach State Reds Initiative will investigate the feasibility of using hatchery reared red drum as a fishery management tool while providing additional much needed science based information;

(9) A survey of the Coastal Conservation Association of Georgia's membership revealed that nearly 50 percent were in favor of the red drum becoming Georgia's state salt-water fish; and

(10) Establishing an official state salt-water fish is necessary to fully recognize the importance of our coastal fisheries to our state, and the red drum is deserving of the attention and appreciation of the citizens of this state by designation as the official state salt-water fish.

SECTION 2.

Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state symbols, is amended by adding a new Code Section 50-3-82 to read as follows:

"50-3-82.

The red drum is designated as the official Georgia salt-water fish."

SECTION 3.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.